

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ENHANCEMENT OF COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

SUBMITTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON THE ENHANCEMENT OF COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

(Algeria, Canada, Sweden and Thailand)

Purpose, mandate and organisation of the Committee

Under the decisions on the Convention's machinery and meetings, adopted at the Maputo Review Conference in 2014, the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance was established with the following purpose: 'to assist the States Parties in the full implementation of Article 6 of the Convention, in line with their reaffirmation that ending the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines is a shared commitment'.

With this purpose in mind the Committee is mandated to, among other things, promote cooperation and assistance under the Convention, facilitate the fostering of partnerships between States Parties seeking to receive assistance and those in a position to provide such assistance, and coordinate with other implementation mechanisms established by the States Parties in order to facilitate and accelerate the full implementation of the Convention.

Since the Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties, the Chair of the Committee has convened approximately nine Committee meetings. These meetings included internal meetings of the Committee to discuss different aspects of the Committee's work, as well as meetings with the different Committees of the Convention and meetings with diverse stakeholders, including mine-affected States Parties, in preparation for their participation in the Individualised Approach as well as with those interested in learning more about and participating in the Individualised Approach.

Individualised Approach

As part of the Committee's mandate to, in part, "facilitate the fostering of partnerships between States Parties seeking to receive assistance and those in a position to provide such assistance", and in follow up to the recommendations contained in the final document of the Fifteenth Meeting of the States Parties (in particular Annex 1), the Committee continues to develop the Individualised Approach to cooperation and assistance. This approach aims to establish a process for interested mine-affected States Parties to share detailed information on the challenges they face and their needs to address these challenges in order to fulfil their obligations under the Convention. It provides an opportunity to connect and a platform to facilitate ongoing engagement with the donor community, partners for South-South and regional cooperation, mine action operators and other stakeholders.

Much of the Committee's work in 2018 has focused on the Individualised Approach. The Committee has received expressions of interest from four States Parties with two of these (Serbia and Sri Lanka) preparing to launch the Individualised Approach platforms on the margins of the 7-8 June 2018 intersessional meetings. The Committee views that this approach can serve as a valuable step for these mine-affected States Parties in making their needs for assistance known and foster partnerships with those States and organizations in a position to provide assistance. We encourage participating States to

view this as part of an ongoing dialogue to foster cooperation and assistance, one which leads to future meeting, and enhanced coordination of mine action stakeholders, in-country, and in Geneva as needed.

At the Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors in February 2018, the Committee met with Sudan and Zimbabwe to follow up on the Individualised Approach meetings that they held in 2017.

Sudan launched its Individualised Approach platform in June 2017, one year ago. In follow up, a stakeholder coordination meeting took place in Khartoum in October 2017, kindly hosted by the Embassy of Japan. The meeting report from the Geneva launch was provided to all participants in the stakeholder coordination meeting in Khartoum and the Committee, represented by the ISU, delivered remarks. Overall, Sudan has found that the Individualised Approach platform has been of benefit. Since the meeting in Geneva, it has received initial support from one state that had not recently provided assistance for mine action in Sudan. In addition, it received a delegation from a state in a position to provide assistance which had not previously been engaged in Sudan, and which has since committed support to advance Sudan's mine action objectives. It has also raised interest from non-governmental organizations that were encouraged to consider working in Sudan. Sudan has also hosted a regional workshop on mine risk education. In 2017, two states in Sudan were declared mine free, and it anticipates declaring a third one mine free in 2018.

Zimbabwe launched its IA platform at the 16th Meeting of States Parties in December 2017. During the meeting, all the organizations active in Zimbabwe took the floor and expressed the importance supporting Zimbabwe's mine action programme to remove the threat from communities. Zimbabwe subsequently held a second stakeholder gathering in Harare in March 2018 as a part of the launch of its national mine action strategy.

The Committee intends to continue to formulate the lessons learned as well to improve the methodology of the Individualised Approach with focus given in drawing upon those lessons gained from affected States conducting follow-up in-country coordination mechanisms between affected States and States and organization in a position to provide assistance, and at the same time continue its follow-up with the mine-affected State Parties and in this way the Individualised approach facilitates a methodology of engagement with affected States until completion. This year, a key focus of the Committee will be scaling up the Individualised Approach to offer support to more States Parties. The Committee is supporting the launch of two IA platforms during the intersessional meetings in 2018. It is also in conversation with an additional three States that are interested in participation in the individualised approach on the margins of the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties (17MSP) in November 2018. The Committee will continue the development of the Individualised Approach and will present some conclusions and recommendations to the 17MSP.

Furthermore, as part of the Committee's mandate to "coordinate with other implementation mechanisms established by the States Parties in order to facilitate and accelerate the full implementation of the Convention" the Committee participated in a retreat organized by the Committee on Victim Assistance to discuss the implementation of this important aspect of the Convention. One of the conclusions of the Committee's participation at the Victim Assistance retreat was the possibility of hosting Individualised Approach meetings focused on other areas of mine action, such as Victim Assistance, in the near future.

Information Sharing

As part of the Committee's mandate to look at the use for information exchange tools to foster partnerships between States Parties, the Committee has been exploring ways in which it can assist states in developing their country pages on the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention website to better facilitate cooperation and assistance, as well as the possibility of an online reporting tool.

In a letter sent by the Committee's dated 8 February 2018 highlighting its priorities, the Committee encouraged States to provide new or updated information to the Platform for Partnerships, or to update their country pages. To date, the Committee has not received any new or updated information nor feedback on the functioning of the platform.

To facilitate the voluntary expansion of States Parties' country pages, the Committee has developed an informal placemat of options as an internal working tool. On a voluntary basis, each state will have the ability to select its preferred options and provide the required information in collaboration with the Implementation Support Unit and the Committee. An example of the information which could be included on a country page for a mine-affected state party is annexed to this document. The options listed are neither required nor exhaustive but they serve as an example of how a State Party could use its country page to further elaborate on the relevance, status and needs and challenges pertaining to its implementation obligations.

The Committee is also considering recommending an online tool for Article 7 reporting to facilitate this work on the part of States Parties and to encourage sharing of information on the challenges faced and resources available. This would not create additional reporting requirements, nor would it replace the option to provide reports through the current system. It would follow the current reporting templates and it would provide question by question access to sections from the Guide to Reporting that was adopted by the States Parties at the Fourteenth Meeting of the States Parties. In addition to facilitating the submission of Article 7 reports, it would assist in the analysis work of the ISU and the Convention's Committees and therefore facilitate our collaborative work in the implementation of the Convention. The Committee will continue consultations to this end following the intersessional meetings. Taken together with an a strengthened country page, this tool could offer opportunities to support mine-affected states in communicating the status of implementation, and both sources could help to provide current, accessible data via states' country pages. This could also dovetail well with the work currently underway to develop and articulate minimum data requirements for data collection and reporting and other efforts being carried out to improve data transparency and communication among stakeholders.

Mapping needs and challenges

The Committee understands that a continued dialogue is important to ensure progress of the Convention. One key aspect of this is for States Parties to share their needs and challenges. The Committee hopes that the aforementioned items, including the Individualised Approach and information sharing tools, will support such exchanges. In addition, the work and knowledge of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation and the Committee on Victim Assistance, which work closely with States Parties, is crucial for the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance. For this reason, the Committee engages with both Committees in order to ensure that the Committee maintains strong communication concerning our efforts.

The Article 7 transparency reports are currently being analysed by the other Committees under the Convention and the Implementation Support Unit. One key aspect of the ISU's review this year is implementation of gender and diversity sensitive provisions of the Maputo Action Plan. The Committee hopes to work with the ISU to better understand the cooperation and assistance needs and challenges of states in implementing these aspects of the Action Plan, with the hopes of offering recommendations on taking them forward in a transparent and accountable manner.

Conclusion

The Committee intends to continue its work to fulfill its mandate along the lines of the priorities it set out towards the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties. It would welcome any feedback or suggestions for improving its work.

Cooperation and assistance is a key element of meeting our goal of a mine free world by 2025. The Maputo Action Plan contains six important actions on this topic. As we begin to consider the transition to the Convention's next review cycle, it may be worthwhile to assess the broader role of the Convention's machinery and processes in implementation of the Individualised Approach.

The idea behind the Individualised Approach is not new. However, the Committee has observed growing recognition of its value as a practical tool for implementation of the Convention. The Individualised Approach's support for increased transparency and accountability and the development of ongoing relationships can serve to create a group of states that work in cooperation with an affected state to assist with the completion of its obligations under the Convention, although this is not a requirement for use of this tool. The Maputo Action Plan highlighted this good practice in 2014:

- Action 21: States Parties in a position to provide assistance and those seeking to receive assistance, where relevant and to the extent possible, will enter into partnerships for completion, with partners specifying their responsibilities to each other, articulating age- and gender-sensitive time-bound objectives and targets, making financial or other commitments, if possible on a multi-year basis, and engaging regularly in a dialogue on progress and challenges in meeting goals.

Some groups of states have already developed such partnerships on their own. Where this is not the case, the Individualised Approach offers an entry point to do so, or to provide support in cases where the remaining work to fulfill obligations is limited and an affected state would benefit from assistance to reach the stage where its work becomes self-sustaining, such as clearing residual contamination or assisting mine victims on an ongoing basis.

The Committee sees great potential for the Individualised Approach but it is limited by its resources and time in the schedule of the Convention's meetings. For example, during the intersessional meetings this year, we have doubled the number of Individualised Approach meetings compared to the number that we held during the intersessional meetings last year. This will make for a very busy program for all participants. Even if the Committee were to also do so at the Meeting of States Parties, it would take seven years to support one launch meeting for each affected State Party, not to mention the prospects of follow up on national process and possible subsequent meetings for some states. In addition, those working most closely on clearance and victim assistance, which have been the two main areas of focus at Individualised Approach meetings, are on other Committees that could provide valuable input into the development and continuity of Individualised Approach platforms.

It may be worth considering an overarching process within the Convention to facilitate these platforms, supported by the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance, along with other committees as relevant. Given the Convention's 2025 Goal, it would bear further consideration as to how this could be appropriately resourced in terms of time within the Convention's meeting schedule, committee members and ISU personnel.

The Committee encourages States Parties to liaise with the Committee and the ISU to examine ways in which to further their communications and transparency through the Convention's social media and website, including each State Party's country page.

Finally, it is the Committee's observation that in discussions between affected states parties and those in a position to provide assistance, socio-economic impact on mines, the situation for mine survivors, gender analysis and gender mainstreaming are frequently raised as important for operational effectiveness in mine action and for advancement of human rights. These issues are clearly included throughout the Maputo Action Plan, including on the actions on Cooperation and Assistance. The Committee is currently drawing this type of information from the Article 7 reports to study the extent to which this is reported and, if necessary, to consider ways to increase transparency on these issues in the years ahead.

We look forward to continuing our work with a view to presenting further results at the next Meeting of the States Parties in Geneva in November.

Attachment

- Draft country page options placemat for mine-affected states

Table of Contents

(include hyperlinks to each section included by the state and notes re: status of treaty implementation)

Sample Country Table of Contents

- National Context
- Status of Convention Implementation
 - Accession
 - Article 5
- Priorities
- Needs and Challenges
- Maps

Photo

National Context

(could include relevant background and national contribution, cross cutting issues such as socio-economic impact of mine action (number of victims, gender dimensions, impact on stabilization and/or development (incl. SDGs), migration, provision of aid)

Status of Convention Implementation

(this information is already included by the ISU on each country page)

Priorities

Needs and Challenges

(could include subsections such as clearance, mine risk education, victim assistance, stockpile destruction, capacity building, national legislation or other)

Maps

(Map(s) demonstrating the national context, including, if of interest, tools using nationally-owned data from IMSMA on mine clearance made publicly available by the affected state)

Individualized Approach

(could include highlights of cooperation, details of upcoming stakeholder meetings (at international meetings or domestically, reports of meetings, presentations from IA meetings)

Partnerships

(could include list of states providing assistance, international and local NGOs, UN support, projects underway, success stories, good practices)

Contact Information

(could be provided by state or drawn from Article 7 report and may include national authority and/or other contacts in-country on specific issues such as victim assistance or capacity building)

Additional Resources

(could include links to: national Article 7 transparency report, national mine action website, national mine action strategy (or multiple strategies such as clearance and victim assistance), Landmine Monitor profile, Clearing the Mines profile, or other links selected by the state)